

VZCZCXRO0463

OO RUEHBC RUEHBZ RUEHDE RUEH DU RUEHKUK RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHROV
RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKB #0124/01 0330721
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 020721Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2816
INFO RUEHZA/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000124

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A A/S CARTER, AF/SPG, AF/C
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/02/2019

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: CHADIAN REBELS - HASSABALLAH EMPHASIZES ALLIANCE,
NOT UNIFICATION, OF CHADIAN REBELS

REF: KHARTOUM 118

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)
)

11. (C) SUMMARY: On January 30, Adouma Hassaballah Djadarab, the First Vice President of the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR,) told poloffs that UFR is an alliance of existing Chadian rebel groups, not the "fusion" of all movements. Like UFR President Erdimi (reftel,) Hassaballah emphasized that UFR's leadership will first focus on building its political foundation, opening dialogue with the Government of Chad, and explaining itself to the international community. Despite these pledges, Hassaballah stated that within two weeks he will return to the field and that "our soldiers are getting anxious." Separately, on February 1 the Chairman of the Sudan Liberation Movement, Minni Minnawi, told CDA Fernandez that he has been in contact with Timane Erdimi and provided his assessment of UFR's new leader. END SUMMARY.

"UFR IS AN ALLIANCE, NOT A FUSION"

- - - - -
12. (C) A confident Adouma Hassaballah, accompanied by a staff assistant and a bodyguard, told poloffs that he is happy with Timane Erdimi's selection as President of UFR, his own appointment as First Vice President, and the improved coordination between Chadian rebel movements. Hassaballah emphasized, however, that "the formation of UFR does not mean that the rebel movements have fused together into one, each movement - UFCD, FPRN, UFDD, etc.- will still exist and maintain its own leaders." As an example of this alliance, Hassaballah said that prominent rebel leader and head of UFDD, Mohammed Nouri, chose not to take a leadership position within UFR as he preferred to focus on his own movement. (Note: Abaker Tollimi, the Secretary General of UFR, is the most senior ranking UFDD member in UFR. End Note.)

CONTINUED POLITICAL FOCUS

- - - - -
13. (C) Hassaballah stated that UFR continues to focus on its political foundation and that it will focus first on diplomatic engagement before returning to war against the Government of Chad. "We are ready for dialogue with Deby, with civil society leaders in Chad, and with the political opposition," stated Hassaballah. Hassaballah stated that UFR leadership will have to draft the designation of responsibilities for each position. When asked about his own focus and priorities as First Vice President of UFR, Hassaballah stated, "This is a new position so we are still working out the details of the job." Hassaballah added that before engaging in military action, UFR will first "explain our position to our Chadian brothers."

IMMEDIATE PLANS

14. (C) Hassaballah stated that within the next two weeks he plans on returning to the field. He said that "we are not ready to attack, but our men have been waiting for six months, are anxious, and want to return to their home country and see their families." Despite the impatience of his men, Hassaballah stated that he has full command over his fighters and that they will wait for their orders before beginning an attack. Hassaballah reported that UFR has not yet assigned a chief military commander for UFR. As his movement has the largest number of fighters, Hassaballah stated that he expects that a UFCD commander will be appointed as the chief UFR commander.

MINNAWI COMMENTS ON ERDIMI

15. (C) On February 1, Senior Presidential Assistant and SLM Chairman, Minni Minnawi, told CDA Fernandez that he had recently spoken with UFR's new President Timane Erdimi several times. Minnawi confirmed that regime thugs had killed Erdimi's sister following his selection as UFR President. Minnawi also stated that the regime's thugs had even broken up the Erdimi family's condolence call ("azza") in Ndjamena. According to Minnawi, many of Deby's generals are now leaning towards Erdimi. Minnawi stated that he is suspicious of Erdimi's Sudanese support and that regardless of his ties to the GOS, Erdimi would do the same thing as Deby; use support from the Sudanese regime to gain power and then follow his own path and probably continue to support his Zaghawa brethren in Darfur.

KHARTOUM 00000124 002 OF 002

COMMENT

16. (C) Minnawi's outreach to fellow Zaghawa Timane Erdimi is significant and shows the fluidity of national identity, the power of ethnic ties across the Chadian-Sudanese border, and the interwoven nature of the conflicts in both countries. Meanwhile, Hassaballah reminded poloffs of his own independence within the alliance, rather than focus on the rebels' achievement in selecting a new leader. His assertion that a UFCD commander must take the lead in military matters is another sign of continued factionalism and internal competition between the rebel movements. However, the continuity between Erdimi's and Hassaballah's messages was striking and indicates that UFR leaders are coordinating their public message. As the Chadian rebels have now repeatedly stated their desire to speak to Deby and the GoC, the USG should now begin to test the water with President Deby and others who have an interest in a peaceful and stable Chad. In particular, it would be beneficial to directly learn the positions of the European Union, France, and the African Union on dialogue between the Chadian rebels and the Chadian Government. Absent a significant push from France or the US for Deby to negotiate with the rebels (combined with a push for JEM to withdraw from South Darfur) there will likely be a Chadian rebel attack on Ndjamena sometime in the near future.

FERNANDEZ